

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 293

INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

CINCPAC

UNCLAS CANBERRA 2928

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINR, AS, US

SUBJ: LOS ANGELES ESPIONAGE TRIAL: US-AUSTRALIAN JOINT

DEFENSE FACILITIES

1. SUMMARY: TESTIMONY IN BOYCE ESPIONAGE TRIAL IN LOS ANGELES HAS LED TO A SPATE OF PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS AND PRESS COMMENT CONCERNING US/AUSTRALIAN JOINT DEFENSE FACILITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PARLIAMENT, OPPOSITION LEADER GOUGH WHITLAM SAID THAT ALLEGATIONS THAT AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE SECRETS MAY HAVE BEEN PASSED TO THE RUSSIANS SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED BY THE HOPE COMMISSION ON AUSTRALIAN SECURITY. HE ALSO ASKED THAT AN AUSTRALIAN OBSERVER ATTEND BOYCE'S TRIAL IN ORDER TO LOOK AFTER AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY INTERESTS. OPPOSITION BACK-BENCHER FRANK STEWART, NOTING THAT "TRW WAS ONE OF TWO MAIN CONTRACTORS FOR THE JOINT AUSTRALIAN-U.S. DEFENSE STATION IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA" ASKED
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WHETHER BOYCE'S PASSING INFORMATION TO THE RUSSIANS WAS NOT A GRAVE BREACH OF AUSTRALIAN AS WELL AS AMERICAN SECURITY. STEWART SUGGESTED THAT THE RUSSIANS NOW MUST KNOW THE FUNCTIONS OF THE JOINT FACILITIES. ANOTHER OPPOSITION BACK-BENCHER, LAURIE WALLIS, ASKED PRIME MINISTER FRASER IF HE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE GOA HAD BEEN FULLY AND ACCURATELY BRIEFED ON THE STATIONS AT PINE GAP AND NURRUNGA. IN REPLY, FRASER TOLD WHITLAM

THAT HE WOULD "EXAMINE" HIS PROPOSAL TO INVESTIGATE BOYCE'S ALLEGATIONS. HOWEVER, FRASER WAS NOT SURE THAT THIS WAS THE BEST MEANS OF LOOKING INTO THE QUESTIONS IN THAT BOYCE HIMSELF "HAD BEEN CHARGED WITH SERIOUS SECURITY BREACHES IN THE U.S." AUSTRALIAN LEADERS, INCLUDING WHITLAM "WHEN HE WAS IN ANOTHER CAPACITY" WOULD HAVE BEEN BRIEFED ON THE FACILITIES.

3. BRIAN TOOHEY IN THE FINANCIAL REVIEW ALSO USED BOYCE'S TESTIMONY AS A PEG TO RAISE AGAIN THE CLAIM THAT U.S. INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, LATE IN 1975, HAD WARNED THEIR AUSTRALIAN COUNTERPARTS ABOUT THEN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S JEOPARDIZING THE SECURITY OF AMERICAN BASES IN AUSTRALIA THROUGH WHITLAM'S ALLEGED SECURITY BREACHES. BRINGING IN A PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED ANGLE, TOOHEY ALSO CLAIMED THAT THE FINANCIAL REVIEW HAD JUST DISCOVERED THAT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL, SIR JOHN KERR, WAS BRIEFED BY A SENIOR AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE OFFICIAL ON NOVEMBER 8, 1975 CONCERNING WHITLAM'S SECURITY LAPSES. AFTER RAISING THE POSSIBILITY, TOOHEY WENT ON TO NOTE THAT THERE WAS NO HARD EVIDENCE THAT THE NOVEMBER 8 BRIEFING INFLUENCED THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S DECISION TO DISMISS THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT ON NOVEMBER 11, 1975.

4. OTHER AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS ALSO RAISED ISSUE CITING NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON BOYCE CASE AND ALLEGED REPORTS FROM VARIOUS DEFENSE SOURCES DISCLOSING THAT TRW WAS ONE OF THE PRIME CONTRACTORS FOR A SATELLITE PROJECT KNOWN AS PROGRAM 647 WHICH "HAS CIA AND DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY PARTICIPATION."

5. AS USUAL, WE DO NOT PLAN TO COMMENT, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT UNCLASSIFIED

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OF FACT THAT MATTER CONCERNS U.S. COURT CASE CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS.
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